

How Tereus gan forth hir suster take,
That with the noyse of hir he gan awake;

And gan to calle, and dresse him up to ryse,
Remembringe him his erand was to done
from Troilus, and eek his greet emprise;
And caste and knew in good plyt was the mone
To doon viage, and took his wey ful sone
Unto his neces paleys ther bisyde;
Now Janus, god of entree, thou him gyde!

Whan he was come unto his neces place,
Wher is my lady? to hir folk seyde he;
And they him tolde; and he forth in gan pace,
And fond, two othere ladyes sete and she
Withinne a paved parlour; and they three
Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
Of the Sege of Thebes, whyl hem leste.

Quod Pandarus: Ma dame, God yow see,
With al your book and al the companye!
Ey, uncle myn, welcom ywis, quod she,
And up she roos, and by the hond in hie
She took him faste, and seyde: This night thrye,
To goode mote it turne, of yow I mette!
And with that word she down on bench him sette.

Ye, nece, ye shal fare wel the bet,
If God wole, al this yeer, quod Pandarus;
But I am sory that I have yow let
To herken of your book ye preysen thus;
for Goddes love, what seith it? tel it us.
Is it of love? O, som good ye me lere!
Uncle, quod she, your maistresse is not here!

With that they gonnen laughe, and tho she
seyde:
This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede;
And we han herd how that king Laius deyde
Thurgh Edippus his sone, and al that dede;
And here we stenten at these lettres rede,
How the bisshop, as the book can telle,
Amphiorax, fil thurgh the ground to helle.

Quod Pandarus: Al this knowe I myselve,
And al the assege of Thebes and the care;
for herof been ther maked bokes twelve:
But lat be this, and tel me how ye fare;
Do wey your barbe, and shew your face bare;
Do wey your book, rys up, and lat us daunce,
And lat us don to May som observaunce.

H! God forbede! quod she, be ye mad?
Is that a widewes lyf, so God you save?
By God, ye maken me right sore adrad,
Ye ben so wilde, it semeth as ye rave!
It sete me wel bet ay in a cave
To bidde, and rede on holy seyntes lyves:
Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves.

As ever thryve I, quod this Pandarus,
Yet coude I telle a thing to doon you pleye.
Now uncle dere, quod she, tel it us

for Goddes love; is than the assege aweye?
I am of Grekes so ferd that I deye.
Nay, nay, quod he, as ever mote I thryve!
It is a thing wel bet than swiche fyve.

Ye, holy God! quod she, what thing is that?
What? bet than swiche fyve? ey, nay, ywis!
for al this world ne can I reden what
It sholde been; som jape, I trowe, is this;
And but yourselven telle us what it is,
My wit is for to arede it al to lene;
As help me God, I noot nat what ye mene.

And I your borrow, ne never shal, for me,
This thing be told to yow, as mote I thryve!
And why so, uncle myn? why so? quod she,
By God, quod he, that wole I telle as blyve;
for prouder womman were ther noon on lyve,
And ye it wiste, in al the toun of Troye;
I jape nought, as ever have I joye!

Tho gan she wondren more than biforn
A thousand fold, and down hir eyen caste;
for never, sith the tyme that she was born,
To knowe thing desired she so faste;
And with a syk she seyde him at the laste:
Now, uncle myn, I nil yow nought displese,
Nor axen more, that may do yow disese.

So after this, with many wordes glade,
And frendly tales, and with mery chere,
Of this and that they pleyde, and gunnen made
In many an unkouth glad and deep matere,
As frendes doon, whan they ben met yfere;
Til she gan axen him how Ector ferde,
That was the tounes wal and Grekes yerde.

Ful wel, I thanke it God, quod Pandarus,
Save in his arm he hath a litel wounde;
And eek his fresshe brother Troilus,
The wyse worthy Ector the secounde,
In whom that every vertu list abounde,
As alle trouthe and alle gentillesse,
Wysdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse.

In good feith, eem, quod she, that lyketh me;
They faren wel, God save hem bothe two!
for trewely I holde it greet deyntee
A kinges sone in armes wel to do,
And been of good condicions therto;
for greet power and moral vertu here
Is selde yseye in o persone yfere.

In good feith, that is sooth, quod Pandarus;
But, by my trouthe, the king hath sones tweye,
That is to mene, Ector and Troilus,
That certainly, though that I sholde deye,
They been as voyde of vyces, dar I seye,
As any men that liveth under the sonne,
Hir might is wyde yknowe, and what they comne.

Of Ector nedeth it nought for to telle;
In al this world ther nis a better knight
Than he, that is of worthinesse welle;

And he wel more vertu hath than might.
This knoweth many a wys and worthy wight.
The same prys of Troilus I seye,
God help me so, I knowe not swiche tweye.

By God, quod she, of Ector that is sooth;
Of Troilus the same thing trowe I;
for dredelees, men tellen that he dooth
In armes day by day so worthily,
And bereth him here at hoom so gentilly
To every wight, that al the prys hath he
Of hem that me were levest preysed be.

Ye sey right sooth, ywis, quod Pandarus;
For yesterday, whoso hadde with him been,
hemight have wondred upon Troilus;
for never yet so thikke a swarm of been
Ne fleigh, as Grekes fro him gonne fleen;
And thorough the feld, in every wightes ere,
Ther nas no cry but: Troilus is there!

Now here, now there, he hunted hem so faste,
Ther nas but Grekes blood; and Troilus,
Now hem he hurte, and hem alle down he caste;
Ay where he wente it was arayed thus:
he was hir deeth, and sheld and lyf for us;
That as that day ther dorste noon withstonde,
Whyl that he held his bloody swerd in honde.

Therto he is the frendlieste man
Of grete estat, that ever I saw my lyve;
And wher him list, best felawshipe can
To suche as him thinketh able for to thryve.
And with that word tho Pandarus, as blyve,
he took his leve, and seyde: I wol go henne:
Nay, blame have I, myn uncle, quod she thenne.

What cyleth yow to be thus wery sone,
And namelich of wommen? wol ye so?
Nay, sitteth down; by God, I have to done
With yow, to speke of wisdom er ye go.
And every wight that was aboute hem tho,
That herde that, gan fer away to stonde,
Whyl they two hadde al that hem liste in honde.

Whan that hir tale al brought was to an ende
Of hire estat and of hir governaunce,
Quod Pandarus: Now is it tyme I wende;
But yet, I seye, aryseth, lat us daunce,
And cast your widwes habit to mischaunce;
What list yow thus yourself to disfigure,
Sith yow is tid thus fair an aventure?

H! wel bithought! for love of God, quod she,
Shal I not witen what ye mene of this?
No, this thing axeth layser, tho quod he,
And eek me wolde muche greve, ywis,
If I it tolde, and ye it toke amis.
Yet were it bet my tonge for to stille
Than seye a sooth that were ayeins your wille.

for, nece, by the goddesse Minerve,
And Juppiter, that maketh the thonder ringe,
And by the blisful Venus that I serve,

Ye been the womman in this world livinge,
Withoute paramours, to my witinge,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
And that ye witen wel yourself, I leve.

Ywis, myn uncle, quod she, grant mercy;
Your frendship have I founden ever yit;
I am to no man holden trewely
So muche as yow, and have so litel quit;
And, with the grace of God, emforth my wit,
As in my gilt I shal you never offende;
And if I have er this, I wol amende.

But, for the love of God, I yow beseche,
As ye ben he that I most love and triste,
Lat be to me your fremde maner speche,
And sey to me, your nece, what yow liste:
And with that word hir uncle anon hir kiste,
And seyde: Gladly, leve nece dere,
Tak it for good that I shal seye yow here.

With that she gan hir eyen doun to caste,
And Pandarus to coghe gan a lyte,
And seyde: Nece, alwey, lo! to the laste,
Howso it be that som men hem delyte
With subtil art hir tales for to endyte,
Yet for al that, in hir entencioun,
hir tale is al for som conclusioun.

And sithen thende is every tales strengthe,
And this matere is so bihovely,
What sholde I peynte or drawn it on lengthe
To yow, that been my freend so feithfully?
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Biholden hir, and loken on hir face,
And seyde: On suche a mirour goode grace!

Than thoughte he thus: If I my tale endyte
Ought hard, or make a proces any whyle,
She shal no savour han therin but lyte,
And trowe I wolde hir in my wil bigyle.
for tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
Theras they can nat pleyntly understonde;
forthy hir wit to serven wol I fonde:

And loked on hir in a besy wyse,
And she was war that he byheld hir so,
And seyde: Lord! so faste ye me avyse!
Sei ye me never er now? what sei ye, no?
Yes, yes, quod he, and bet wole er I go;
But, by my trouthe, I thoughte now if ye
Be fortunat, for now men shal it see.

for to every wight som goodly aventure
Som tyme is shape, if he it can receyven;
And if that he wol take of it no cure,
Whan that it cometh, but wilfully it weyven,
Lo, neither cas nor fortune him deceyven,
But right his verray slouthe and wrecchednesse;
And swich a wight is for to blame, I gesse.

Good aventure, O bele nece, have ye
ful lightly founden, and ye conne it take;
And, for the love of God, and eek of me,